

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, RP, US

SUBJECT: GOP PUBLICIZES OSMENA LETTER OPPOSING REDUCTION
OF US AID TO PHILIPPINES

REF: MANILA A-228 OF AUGUST 18, 1975

1. AUGUST 21 DAILY EXPRESS AND TIMES JOURNAL GAVE FRONT-PAGE
COVERAGE TO SENATOR SERGIO OSMENA, JR.'S LETTER TO CONGRESS-
MAN FRASER OPPOSING REDUCTION OR WITHDRAWAL OF US AID TO
PHILIPPINES. SOURCE OF STORIES WAS ARTICLE IN PHILIPPINE
REPORTER AUGUST 15-21 ISSUE.

2. OSMENA BEGINS LETTER BY NOTING HE HAS LIVED IN RETIREMENT
SINCE MARTIAL LAW BUT NOW FEELS IMPELLED SHARE CERTAIN VIEWS
WITH THE FRASER COMMITTEE. HE IS DISTURBED BY REPORTS "WELL
MEANING PERSONAGES" HAVE MADE PLEAS FOR TOTAL AID CUTOFF.
"WHATEVER THE MERITS OR DEMERITS OF MARTIAL LAW REGIME IN
THE PHILIPPINES MAY BE" AID TO THE PHILIPPINES IS NOT AID
TO PRESIDENT MARCOS. OSMENA CLAIMS PRESIDENT MARCOS
DECLARED MARTIAL LAW TO "AVERT IMMINENT REBELLION" AND HIS
ENDEAVOR TO BRING PEACE TO ENTIRE NATION IS NOT ENDED.
OSMENA, WHO NOTES GOP'S LAND REFORM PROGRAM TO ATTACK
"ROOTS OF UNREST," SAYS, "I FEEL THAT CONTINUED ASSISTANCE
WILL ELIMINATE THE JUSTIFICATIONS FOR THE CONTINUED
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APPLICATION OF MARTIAL RULE." HE HOPES HIS OPINION WILL

NOT BE CONSIDERED "ANTI-DEMOCRATIC" SINCE HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN ARDENT ADVOCATE OF PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY ALTHOUGH THIS IS "IRRELEVANT TO THE QUESTION AT HAND." OSMENA CONCLUDES LETTER BY STATING HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE DISABILITY CAUSED BY WOUNDS RECEIVED IN THE "NOW INFAMOUS PLAZA MIRANDA BOMBING INCIDENT" WHICH INHIBITS HIS TRAVEL, HE WOULD HAVE WELCOMED OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY BEFORE FRASER COMMITTEE IN PERSON.

2. PHILIPPINE NEWS (AUGUST 16 TO 31) REPORTS OSMENA TOLD NEWSMAN, "NOBODY CAN PRESSURE ME," WHEN REPLYING TO QUESTION ABOUT ROLE ALLEGED MARCOS EMISSARIES AMBASSADOR MUTUC AND ESTANISLAO FERNANDEZ MAY HAVE PLAYED IN PERSUADING HIM TO WRITE LETTER. HE CONCLUDED INTERVIEW, HOWEVER, BY STATING IN TAGALOG, "I THINK THERE'S A RING OF TRUTH TO THE FILIPINO SAYING THAT WE LOVE OUR GRANDCHILDREN MORE THAN OUR OWN CHILDREN."

COMMENT: GOP IS OBVIOUSLY GRATIFIED BY OSMENA LETTER AND HAS DECIDED TO GIVE IT MAXIMUM PUBLICITY. WHAT PROMPTED LETTER (WHICH OBVIOUSLY DISCOMFITS ANTI-MARCOS MOVEMENT IN US - REFAIR) IS UNCLEAR. MOST REASONABLE EXPLANATION IS THAT IT WAS PRICE PAID TO ALLOW HIS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AND GRANDSON (SERGIO OSMENA IV) TO DEPART PHILIPPINES FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT (FOR SERGIO IV) IN US. LETTER, WITH ITS OBLIQUE APPROBATION OF NEW SOCIETY, MAY ALSO REPRESENT STEP TOWARD WHAT MARCOS WANTS IN RETURN FOR FREEING SERGIO OSMENA III, I.E., OSMENA ENDORSEMENT OF NEW SOCIETY. TEXT OF LETTER AS CARRIED BY PNA POUCHED EA/PHL. SULLIVAN

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